Saskatchewan
Agriculture
and Food

Farm & Food Report

Communications Branch, Walter Scott Building
3085 Albert Street, Regina, Canada, S4S 0B1

Saskatchewan

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Log Number: 07-14-64
Week of April 2, 2007

PESTICIDE STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM RETURNS TO SASKATCHEWAN

A program to collect and safely dispose of unwanted and obsolete agricultural pesticides will return to Saskatchewan in 2007. Collection dates are planned for October 23 to 25.

According to Wayne Gosselin in Environmental Policy with Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food, the last province-wide sweep of Saskatchewan occurred in three phases in 1999, 2000 and 2001. More than 156,000 kilograms of obsolete pesticides were collected.

The program was run as a joint initiative involving the federal government, the provincial government, and industry. "We all quite enjoyed the program," Gosselin said. "Everybody found their place and pitched in, and the effort delivered terrific benefits. People were bringing stuff out that was 20 years old."

This year, the program will be run as a three-day province-wide blitz, again involving government and industry stakeholders. Agricultural producers will be able to dispose of outdated, unusable and/or no longer registered agricultural crop protection products.

"We're expecting that another 100 to 150 tonnes of pesticide could come out again," Gosselin said.

Crop protection products destined for disposal will be accepted at designated certified Agrichemical Warehouse Standards Association collection sites throughout Saskatchewan. "I expect there will be around 50 collection points, with the idea being that most areas of the province would be somewhere within 50 kilometres or so of a drop-off site," Gosselin said.

The pesticides collected will then be disposed of at environmentally safe facilities approved by Saskatchewan Environment.

CropLife Canada is the industry umbrella group that represents the manufacturers and distributors of crop protection products. Under its mandate of "working responsibly to protect people and the environment," it is cost-sharing the initiative with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada so that it can be delivered at no cost to producers.

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"We are pleased to be part of a program that provides farmers with a safe, effective and cost-free way to properly dispose of unwanted products," CropLife Canada Vice President of Stewardship Cam Davreux said.

"This program is a great example of how government, grower organizations and industry can work co-operatively towards a better environment."

Unwanted and obsolete agricultural herbicides, insecticides, fungicides and rodenticides will be collected at the drop-off sites, but other products such as antifreeze, solvents, paints, and treated seed will not be accepted.

Details of the program, including a list of collection sites, will be publicized through an extensive advertising and direct mail campaign closer to the collection dates. Agricultural dealers across the province will be provided with a list of collection sites and additional information to assist farmers in identifying obsolete products. All pesticides will be accepted, including those without valid Canadian Pest Control Act numbers. For safety reasons, however, all containers must be labelled.

"Please make sure containers are leak-free and a pesticide name is written on every container," Davreux said. "If you no longer know what the pesticide is, label the container 'pesticide unknown.'"

More information on the Saskatchewan pesticide collection program will be available from your farm supply dealer, by calling CropLife Canada at 1-416-622-9771, or by visiting www.croplife.ca.

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BIOFUELS OPPORTUNITIES PROGRAM GETS FUNDING BOOST

The federal government has committed an additional $10 million in funding to support projects under the Biofuels Opportunities for Producers Initiative (BOPI).

Of that amount, $3 million is allocated to projects already submitted for the 2006-07 fiscal year, due to higher than anticipated demand. The other $7 million is now in place for projects submitted during the upcoming 2007-08 fiscal year.

The BOPI program is intended to help reach the national government's goal of five per cent renewable fuel content in transport fuel by 2010. Its specific objective is to help agricultural producers in the development of sound and well-documented business plans for projects that have significant producer ownership, which is defined as greater than one-third under the eligibility requirements.

The program is delivered in Saskatchewan by the Saskatchewan Council for Community Development (SCCD). The group's Communications Manager Dallas Carpenter says the intent is to get producers involved as owners of the value chain.

"The real key here is that the program is aiming to get more producers involved in the production facilities, so that the producers are not just providing feedstock, but they're actually sharing in the benefits of the end product," said Carpenter.

For the purposes of the program, agricultural producers are defined as individuals, corporations, partnerships, co-operatives or other associations engaged in commercial agricultural production, with at least $10,000 in annual gross farm sales.

Funding can be used for four areas of activity: 1) hiring technical, financial, and business planning advisers to assist in developing business proposals that create or expand biofuels production capacity; 2) undertaking feasibility studies and other studies required to support business proposals; 3) investigating the pre-commercialization of biofuels-related research; and 4) gathering information to help determine opportunities and provide necessary input to generate industry involvement. Priority will be given to projects involving the first two areas.

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Approved projects may receive up to $300,000 in funding, with at least 25 per cent of the project cost being invested as cash by the initiators of the project.

Carpenter says that projects submitted in Saskatchewan will be adjudicated by the SCCD board of directors, but their recommendation is not a guarantee of funding.

"It will all depend on where the greater demand is," said Carpenter. "If our board receives a project, it will not mean that it will necessarily be allocated funding – that will be up to Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada."

The closing date for BOPI project applications is June 22, 2007. They will be forwarded to Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada in September.

"We really want to emphasize the June 22 deadline, and stress that if there's greater demand in Saskatchewan, there could be more of that funding coming here," said Carpenter. "We want to strongly encourage any of the producer groups who are interested to get their applications in."

More information on the BOPI program, its criteria and the application process is available from the SCCD at 1-800-641-8256, or online at www.sccd.sk.ca/bopi.

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ANTHRAX RISK STILL EXISTS FOR 2007

Saskatchewan producers are not out of the woods yet when it comes to the anthrax threat.

Last summer, the province experienced its largest outbreak of anthrax ever. The cases mostly occurred in the northeast part of the province, but other areas were not immune.

Authorities are warning that the risk of livestock contracting anthrax this summer has not disappeared. In fact, three cases have already developed in February 2007.

"Anthrax is a reportable disease under the *Health of Animals Act*. All suspected cases must be reported to a CFIA (Canadian Food Inspection Agency) veterinarian," said Tracy Evans, a Livestock Development Specialist with Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food (SAF).

Three types of anthrax exist: inhalation (breathing in spores), cutaneous (contact with skin), and gastrointestinal (through digestion), which is the most common form in livestock.

Anthrax is considered to be an "environmental" disease, meaning that it is contracted through animals ingesting anthrax spores from the environment, such as soil, water, and forage, and not from other animals.

The anthrax spores enter the animal's blood stream, causing a rapidly fatal blood infection. When the infected animal dies and the bacilli are exposed to oxygen, more spores are produced and enter the environment.

Due to the hardiness of the anthrax spores to climate and the environment, decades may pass without other cases showing up. Anthrax outbreaks can then occur when the spores are brought to the soil surface by digging or flooding.

The livestock producer's best defence is to vaccinate. The vaccine is economical and is available from your local veterinarian. Protection occurs seven to 21 days after delivery, and is estimated to be effective for six to 12 months.

"Your veterinarian may or may not recommend a booster shot depending on herd history and the prevalence of anthrax in your area," Evans noted.

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Vaccinated animals cannot be treated with antibiotics within eight days before or after administering the vaccine, as it will inactivate the vaccine. Withdrawal time for slaughter is 42 days after the last dose was administered.

Care in handling the vaccine is important to the success of the vaccine. As per label recommendations, it must be stored between two and seven degrees Celsius, shaken well before use, and not used in conjunction with antibiotics or disinfectants used to sterilize equipment.

Vaccinating for anthrax can be done at the same time as inoculating for blackleg, infectious bovine rhinotracheitis (IBR), bovine virus diarrhoea (BVD), parainfluenza-3 (PI3) and bovine respiratory syncytial virus (BRSV).

Anthrax does not discriminate by age. Therefore, calves, replacement heifers, yearlings, cows and bulls should all be vaccinated. This vaccine does not pass along passive immunity to an unborn calf, as do some other MLV (modified live vaccines). The minimum age for vaccination is eight weeks, and optimal is four to six months.

"CFIA recommends that if you are within 10 kilometres of a positive premise, meaning a quarter of land where a positive case was diagnosed, you should vaccinate," Evans said.

"Given the size of last year's outbreak, and the comparable environmental conditions between now and then, there is some concern we could see a similar scenario in 2007. Local veterinarians can provide producers with the recommendations for their areas."

A map highlighting the location of anthrax outbreaks in Saskatchewan in 2006 and 2007 can be found on the Farm Animal Council of Saskatchewan website at www.facs.sk.ca.

Additional information on anthrax can be also obtained from SAF, CFIA, Saskatchewan Health, the Public Health Agency of Canada, and your local veterinarian.

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2007 SASKATCHEWAN PASTURE SCHOOL LIKELY TO FILL QUICKLY

Producers considering attendance at the 2007 Saskatchewan Pasture School should make their decision quickly. The fifth annual event, organized by the Saskatchewan Forage Council, will take place June 13 and 14 in Saskatoon.

"It's geared towards producers and grazing managers," said Janice Bruynooghe, Executive Director of the Saskatchewan Forage Council. "This forum allows them to gain practical knowledge and expand their management skills through a combination of seminars, hands-on exercises, and pasture tours."

Attendance at the Pasture School is limited to 50 participants.

"At least 50 per cent of our time is spent in the field on pasture tours," said Bruynooghe. "We try to keep our numbers small, because when we're in the field, we like to have enough resource people so that we can break up in small groups and have lots of one-on-one interaction."

This year's agenda includes sessions on Calculating Stocking Rates, Matching Grazing Animal Requirements to Forage Quality, Herd Health Concerns on Pasture, and a Producer's Perspective on Grazing Legumes.

According to Bruynooghe, the school is very interactive.

"We start at the basic level of discussing how grass grows, as well as some of the basic management principles. Then we put pencil to paper in practical exercises. Next, we hop on the bus and get out to do a bunch of pasture tours," she said.

"We encourage people to get on their hands and knees and do things like plant identification, and to ask lots of questions about how the things they're seeing pertain to their own operations."

Through social events, producer presentations, and panel discussion, the Pasture School also provides plenty of opportunity to exchange views.

"The other important learning that goes on is the peer to peer interaction," Bruynooghe said. "Talking to your neighbour or someone who has a grazing operation in another part of the province, you learn about things that have worked for other producers."

(more)

The 2007 Saskatchewan Pasture School will be held at the Best Western Inn and Suites in Saskatoon. Registration is $132.50 for the first registrant and $106 for any additional registrants from the same operation. The fees are pre-approved for Canadian Agricultural Skills Service eligibility.

The agenda and registration form are available online at www.saskforage.ca.

The Pasture School is a joint project of the Saskatchewan Forage Council, the Western Beef Development Centre, Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food, Ducks Unlimited, the Saskatchewan Watershed Authority, and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada/Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration.

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